UNITY

The Unitarian

MONTHLY

AN ORGAN OF REASONABLE RELIGION

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves!" Tennyson

FAITH
FREEDOM
FELLOWSHIP

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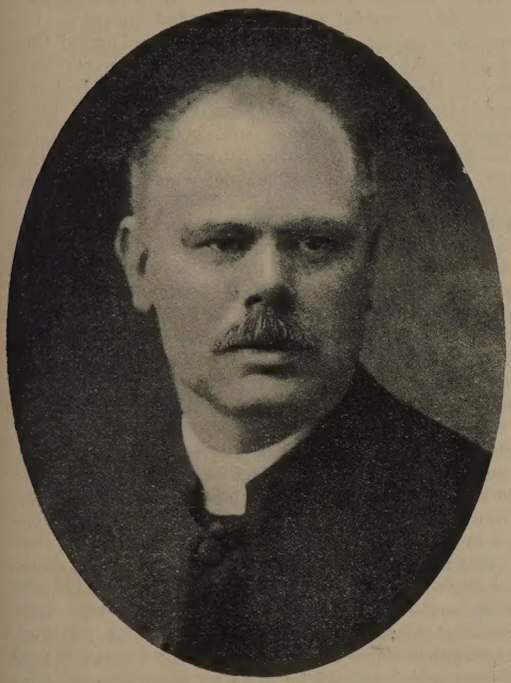


Rev. ALBERT THORNHILL, M.A.

The Rev. Albert Thornhill was born, 1870, at Stalybridge; his parents were members of the Stalybridge Unitarian Church, and the family is still connected, a brother being at present secretary to the Sunday School. After leaving school, he went to work in a cotton mill, and spent evenings at Dukinfield Institute supplementing his education with study of languages, sciences and phonography. He was a zealous temperance worker, became secretary of the Band of Hope Union at 18, lay preacher for the East Cheshire Christian Union at 20. Found his way into journalism, and later was assistant editor of a county Liberal newspaper in Cambridgeshire. Resided in Cambridge seven years, during which in the first four years he gained the University Extension International Scholarship for studies and for an essay on Federalism; conducted special investigations into the operations of the Parish Councils Act and its influence on Agricultural Communities gaining commendation from experts; and made a series of inquiries into Romanist tendencies of High Churchism in Cambridgeshire and neighbouring counties. He entered the University, 1898; graduated B.A., 1902; went to Manchester College, Oxford, 1902, where he completed his theology in honours, with distinction in New Testament, taking the Russel Martineau prize in Hebrew, 1905. He became M.A., Cantab., in same year; minister of Carlisle Unitarian Church, 1905-7, where the membership increased and the financial condition improved; removed owing to bereavement, and went to Dob-lane Chapel, Failsworth, Manchester, where during a short ministry, 1907-8, nearly a hundred names were added to the congregational roll; accepted appointment to Friargate Chapel, Derby, 1908, and during three years by steady propagandist work increased the membership, the congregation became independent of grant aid, there were two successful bazaars, and in addition a special fund of £150 was raised for the renovation of the chapel and to celebrate its 350th anniversary as being probably the oldest Nonconformist community in England. Mr. Thornhill conducted historical researches into the origins of Derby Nonconformity, some results of which have been published. He was secretary, N. Mid. Sunday School Union, and organised courses of religious instruction for its teachers with a prize essay scheme. Was appointed minister at Brookfield, Gorton, 1911. Under his ministry the Church, Sunday School, and connected institutions have prospered; the membership roll has increased; by successful bazaar, 1912, sum of £780 raised for renovations and improvements including installation of electric light in church and school, and additions to the Church organ. Author of 'Heroes of Faith," 1913, issued by the S.S.A., a book very favourably reviewed; has been largely instrumental in the establishment of a ministers' meeting for the cultivation of the devotional spirit. He has a wife and three children.

Easter.

The Light along the ages
  Shines brighter as it goes;
From age to age more g'orious
  Its radiant splendour grows.
Man's life begun so lowly,
  Now soars to heaven above,
To share in life eternal,
  The joys of endless love!

We thank Thee, O our Father!
  For every gift of Thine;
All speak alike the bounty
  Of tenderness divine;
But, every gift surpassing,
  This wondrous thought we own,—
The Son of Man is risen
  To dwell before Thy Throne!

Wherever goodness reigneth
  The soul of Christ lives on,
And every Christ-like spirit
  Shall rise where he hath gone.
Earth's dust hath served its mission;
  Henceforth the soul is free,
And through the heights of being
  Ascends, O God, to Thee!

—W. G. Tarrant.

"Chronicles of Parson Pimm"

Second Series.—(4)—ORTHODOX EXCLUSIVENESS.

Often the lot of a Unitarian minister is one of considerable isolation. His church is the only Unitarian place of worship in the town in which he lives, in most cases, for there are not many towns of moderate size where there is more than one church for Unitarians. Consequently he has to learn to stand alone.

In C—— I was in that kind of position. The orthodox ministers of the town looked askance at me, and just gave me a nod when I passed them in the street as though they were afraid of having any more intimacy than that with a Unitarian. I was invited to help in the local Temperance Society which was reputed to be quite unsectarian.. But it was under orthodox management and their hymn book was Sankey's "Songs and Solos." At this Temperance Society I met some orthodox ministers and thus made their acquaintance, which explains how they got on to nodding terms with me in the street. Being a minister I was elected to the Temperance Society Committee. On one occasion I quietly asked whether the society really was unsectarian.

"Yes, of course it is. The fact that you are in it shows that."

"But its hymn book is sectarian. It represents but one school of religious thought. There are many hymns used which some religious bodies could not conscientiously accept. The book is all right for a Moody and Sankey revival movement, but I thought this was really a Temperance Society."

"So it is a Temperance Society."

"If it is, why not use a Temperance hymn book?"

One or two agreed with me, but the majority felt that what had served them satisfactorily so long it would be unwise to change. So I had to grin and bear it or quit. But I remained amongst them in order gradually to broaden and liberalise the organisation as much as occasion would permit.

Some very successful Sunday evening theatre services that I organised on undenominational lines made the orthodox ministers jealous. I invited leading citizens of the town to help me as a committee for these services. The Mayor of the town, a broad-minded Baptist, was one of them who joined in with us. After several weeks of crowded audiences the orthodox ministers got at the Mayor and urged that they should be invited to take part in those services. So the Mayor asked me to consent to this. I agreed conditionally that the selection of hymns and management of the devotional part should be left in my hands as a security against the services being turned into an evangelical revival movement. The ministers would not accept the conditions, and they were kept out of it. But before the next winter season came on they applied to the theatre manager to let the theatre to them and not to me. The manager refused, but that got him into such unpleasantness that he had to refuse me too so as not to favour me more than others, and consequently the services were not repeated. Many people stopped me in the streets and asked me why there were no more theatre services, and when I explained why, they cried "Shame!" I invited them to my chapel and advertised "Pleasant Sunday Evenings" there after my ordinary evening service same time as was arranged at the theatre. Some came, but not a large number. Many people would go to a theatre who would not go to a chapel.

But my worst experience of orthodox exclusiveness in this town was at the instance of a narrow-minded Congregational minister. It happened like this. Some of the teachers of the orthodox Sunday schools agreed that there ought to be a local Sunday School Union which should be open to the teachers of all the Nonconformist Sunday Schools in the town. Consequently in due course I was invited along with another delegate from my Sunday School to attend a meeting summoned to consider the proposal to establish the suggested union.

We went, and we were well received. As it happened I was the only minister present. The Congregational minister and his friend, the Presbyterian minister, had gone away on holiday, and none of the Methodist ministers nor the Baptists made a point of being present. It was agreed that a Union be established. Officers were appointed "pro tem"; a committee was nominated on which it was insisted that I should be included as a member. But the appointment of committee was postponed to another

meeting which was to be more fully representative of all the schools. The time drew near to the date of that second meeting. My fellow delegate and I received a written summons to it a few days previously. But the day before the meeting was to be held I received a letter from the secretary informing me with regret that he had discovered that he had made a mistake in summoning Unitarians to the meeting, for he had been advised and instructed that only Evangelical Christians could be qualified for membership of the proposed Union, which meant that Unitarians must be excluded. He expressed his sorrow that we had been misled by being invited originally, and wrote in order to spare us the unpleasant experience of having to be told this at the meeting.

I did not feel inclined to acquiesce in this irregular proceeding. The expressed wish of the meeting we had already attended was to be respected by us rather than this private and inspired letter from the secretary. So I saw my co-delegate, and we agreed to attend the meeting seeing that we had been summoned to it.

We went. It was more largely attended than before. There were therefore several persons present who were not at the first meeting. The Rev. Mr. P.——, the Congregational minister, and his friend, the Rev. Mr. R.——, the Presbyterian, were both present. The Congregational minister was elected chairman. The minutes of the previous meeting were read. Then the chairman said that the proposed Union was intended to be affiliated to the Sunday School Union, London, and to be affiliated to that they would be required to be Trinitarians believing in the deity of Jesus Christ. That would limit the membership to Evangelical Christians. He hoped that it would be decided to affiliate with the London S.S. Union, otherwise they would be deprived of the many advantages which connection with that Union would secure. He was sorry that this was not clearly seen before the first meeting was summoned, so that misunderstanding might have been avoided. But there the matter stood, and he hoped the meeting would make what he considered to be a wise decision.

At this stage and before the subject was developed further I thought it desirable to explain our position. I reminded the meeting that we had been twice invited, that it was not of our seeking, and that the private letter I had received from the secretary had not behind it the authority of any meeting of representatives. I expressed the opinion that it would not be a very Christian proceeding, having themselves invited us to join them, to turn upon us now and say that our presence was not desired. And I ventured to point out that they had a splendid opportunity of establishing a Sunday School Union on a broad unsectarian basis, and I sincerely hoped for the good of the whole town that they would make such use of that opportunity. So I moved "that the membership of the proposed Union should be open to the teachers of all Sunday schools belonging to any religious denomination of professing Christians." To my agreeable surprise this was immediately seconded by a Methodist. The chairman argued strongly against it, and there was a warm discussion in which opposition views were represented amongst the orthodox, but when it was put to the vote the motion was lost; about seven voted for it.

At that I rose and thanked those who had first invited us into their fellowship, and justified our presence on this second occasion as a matter of duty to urge the wider alternative upon them. The majority had decided otherwise; we were now excluded by vote; we thanked those who voted with us, and begged to withdraw. So we left the meeting.

The Union was established on the Evangelical or Sectarian basis. But the decision caused widespread dissatisfaction in the town. Letters from some orthodox S.S. teachers appeared in the newspapers denouncing our exclusion. There was a lengthy newspaper discussion on the subject which must have been very unpleasant to those who had barred us out.

Many things have happened since then. Instances of a much more liberal spirit can be quoted, though there is yet much of the old narrow exclusiveness existing. Unitarians, and especially Unitarian ministers, are often called upon by imperative duty to face orthodox opposition, and to defend the right of their churches to be. It is a good discipline to learn to stand alone, and to hold the fort without yielding.

ASPIRATIONS:

And fierce though the fiends may fight,
And long though the angels hide,
I know that truth and right
Have the universe on their side;
And that somewhere beyond the stars
Is a love that is better than fate,
When the night unlocks her bars,
I shall see Him—and I can wait.

—Washington Gladden.

No man is perfect, or ever was. The conditions of our life forbid it, and we should have reason to be sorry if they did not. For there can be no progress in a perfect life. Yet some souls there are that reach a higher outlook and breathe a clearer air than we have yet attained. Follow them!

—Rev. R. W. Boynton.

PRAYER: Almighty and Everlasting God, who hast made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth,—reveal to us our sins of prejudice and pride and passion, that we may see the sowing of the tares of misery now reaped in blood and tears and know Thy judgments still are true and righteous altogether. Bless the peacemakers of every land who live in hope and work in faith. And speed, O speed the happy day, foreseen of old, when all nations and races and peoples shall be one, and wars and rumours of war be at last no more.—Amen.

—Rev. John Haynes Holmes.

Scenes from Christian History.

BY REV. WILLIAM C. HALL, M.A.

XIX.—LOYOLA.

Inigo Lopez de Recalde was born in 1491 at the Castle of Loyola in Guipuzcoa, Spain. He was probably the youngest of the family of eight sons and four daughters of Don Beltran, who, being, as one writer has said, a fosterer of secular rather than religious ambitions, sent him to the Court of Ferdinand of Aragon. He took up the profession of arms, and was engaged in much fighting until severely wounded at the siege of Pampeluna in 1521. There a stone dislodged by a shot struck his left leg, and the rebounding cannon ball shattered his right. He submitted to frightful operations without flinching, but his career as a soldier was ended. On his bed he asked for a chivalrous romance. No such book was at hand, but his attendants brought him a "Life of Christ" by a Saxon monk named Ludolph, and a treatise on the "Lives of the Saints." Reading these, he at length asked himself "Why should I not do as this one or that?" Then he thought of rigorous preparation, of penance, fasting, prayer, and pilgrimage, to fit himself to become a soldier of "that sweet Captain, Jesus Christ." Although one foot was still unhealed, he travelled to Montserrat, and there resolved to "watch his arms" at the Church of Our Lady. "Here, on the eve of the Annunciation, 1522, you have our Ignatius,"—he took this religious name out of homage to the martyred bishop of Antioch—"seeking a beggar on whom he bestows his fine clothes; then, girding himself in the sackcloth gown which symbolised his armour of poverty, he hangs up sword and dagger by Our Lady's statue, and watches through the night before the altar, now kneeling, now from much weakness leaning on his staff." Next day he went to Manresa. Here he stayed some months, "tending the sick in the hospital, praying, and practising rigid austerities—a hair-shirt next his skin, an iron chain or a girdle woven of a prickly plant round his waist. Then he moved to the cave on the hillside which has become famous as the Cave of Manresa." He went through a protracted spiritual preparation, submitting himself to terrible denials and sufferings which left their mark on him for the rest of his days. He had marvellous visions, thought out the plan of the society he was to found, and worked out his famous "Spiritual Exercises," the system which was to be its disciplinary basis. He left Manresa for the Holy Land. Returning, he studied at Barcelona, Alcala, Salamanca, and Paris; then gradually gathered round him a small band of disciples. These were the first of the Company, later to be known as the Society of Jesus, the organisation which checked and very extensively counteracted the Reformation. They bound themselves to the most solemn vows, and placed themselves at the disposal of the Pope. The tendency of the day was to the suppression of all religious orders, but Ignatius, in spite of discouragement and rebuff, would not brook defeat or denial, and eventually in 1540, what we usually call the Jesuit order was sanctioned by a papal bull. Its members were to be the militia of the Holy See, devoting themselves to its service whenever it directed, to work for the propagation of the faith as preachers and directors of consciences, and above all by means of the education of the young, and to take the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience to the General whom they set over themselves.

Many legends of miraculous events have gathered round the life of Ignatius. They attest to a man of exceptional spiritual introspection and exaltation, and of unquenchable religious missionary zeal and enterprise. A man of so great will must have achieved in any profession or vocation; given the vision of God, he followed it to the end, and there resulted the most intricate and elaborate religious organisation that Christianity has seen. As Unitarians we stand poles asunder from it, but we have a good deal to learn from the character of its founder, from his resolve to follow his vision of truth and service, his unremitting labours for his faith, his self-sacrifice, his humility and pride in his mission. It has been said that he forestalled us in the use of a fine description when he called his followers the Company of Jesus. We can leave the name of Jesuit with his people. But we might do more for the world—and not a few of our congregations might incidentally be quickened into a new existence—if we had the spirit that animated him and sent his disciples forth to win adherents to the faith.

Memorial Sundays.

BY A. D. TYSSEN, D.C.L.

April 4 is Easter Sunday. It is marked with the birth of John Towill Rutt, the biographer of Dr. Priestley in 1760; of Dorothea Dix in 1802, and J. Freeman Clarke in 1810; also with the deaths of S. Ambrose at Milan in 397; Simon Episcopius at Amsterdam in 1643; Robert Ainsworth, compiler of a Latin dictionary, and Daniel Neal, author of a History of Puritans, in 1743; Oliver Goldsmith, the poet, in 1774; Marshal Massena in 1817; and Lady Burleigh in 1589. The last named was one of four learned sisters. Hayden, the painter, noted in his diary on April 4, 1846, the beginning of the end. He died by his own hand some two months later worn out by disappointments. Simon Episcopius is mentioned many times in Wallace's Anti-Trinitarian Biography.

April 11 is S. Guthlac's Day. That Saint led a retired life at Crogland Isle in the South of Lincolnshire, and died there on Ap. 11, 716. The same day saw the deaths of Cardinal Beaufort in 1447; Pope Gregory XIII., the Reformer of the Calendar, in 1585; and Stanislaus Peniatowski, the last King of Poland, in 1798. Also Edward Wightman, a Unitarian martyr, was burnt at Lichfield on Ap. 11, 1612. Some information concerning Edward Wightman may be found in Wallace's Anti-Trinitarian Biography

II. 534-539, III. 565-568; and a leaflet, giving an account of him, was issued at Essex Hall three years ago in celebration of the tercentenary of his martyrdom.

April 18 is the anniversary of the opening of the first Triennial Conference at Liverpool, in 1882. It was the birthday of Robert Patterson, F.R.S., in 1802, and George Henry Lewes in 1817; and the death-day of John Leland, the Antiquary, in 1552; of John Foxe, the Martyrologist, in 1587; of Judge Jeffreys in 1689; and of Dr. Erasmus Darwin in 1802. The last named was the grandfather of Charles Darwin; he was a physician by profession, and a poetic writer. He expressed Unitarian views and is the composer of the hymn "The Lord, how tender is His love," which is No. 110 of our Hymns of Prayer and Praise.

April 25 is the anniversary of the martyrdom of George Van Parris in 1551. It is called S. Mark's Day in the Church Calendar. It commemorates the birth of the first Prince of Wales at Carnarvon in 1284; and of Oliver Cromwell in 1599; and the death of William Cowper, the poet, in 1800. It is the latest day on which Easter can fall. An account of George Van Parris may be found in Wallace's Anti-Trinitarian Biography, Vol. I, 13-14, Vol. II., 124-127.

Literature.

"Mountain Pathways—a study in the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount, with a new translation and critical notes," by Hector Waylen, and an introductory letter by F. C. Burkitt, M.A., D.D., Norrisian Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. 2nd Edition, revised and enlarged. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., Broadway House, Carter-lane, London, E.C. 3s. 6d.

The purpose of this book is stated by the author in his Preface:—"With regard to the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount" it was "with a desire to ascertain more exactly what those teachings really were, and to produce a more correct translation than had hitherto been set forth, that the present work was undertaken." And Professor Burkitt thus describes in his Introductory Letter what the task of the student is who engages in this research: "He has to discover by criticism, that is by scientific study, the genuine words and the historical acts of his Master, and then to consider them, not in order to ascertain what message they may have for himself, but what message they had for the Jewish people in the first century of our era." Mr. Waylen brings to his task the qualities and methods of the scholar who knows well what he is doing. In the chapter (I) entitled "In what language did Jesus speak?" we are told that it was "Galilean Aramaic," and in his translation of the Sermon on the Mount Mr. Waylen follows the revised Greek of Westcott and Hort, but introduces several readings from Professor Burkitt's translation from the Old Syriac, of the four Gospels used in the early Syrian Churches about the middle of the second century, because "Syriac readings are often manifestly better than those of the 'received' Greek." As a specimen of Mr. Waylen's more correct translation of the sayings of Jesus the following is interesting: "Come unto me, all ye toilers and bearers of heavy burdens, and I will make (your toil) to cease. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me! for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find relief in your souls. For my yoke is gracious, and my burden is light." Turning to the Sermon on the Mount we are told, "The lamp of the body is the eye: if, therefore, thine eye be clear thy whole body will be luminous."

"Do not suppose that I have come to break down the Law and the Prophets. I have not come to break down, but to make complete."

"Now if thy right eye ensnare thee, pluck it out and throw it from thee; for it is highly to thine advantage that one of thy members perish, and not thy whole body go into Ge' Hinnom."

Mr. Waylen explains in a note that Ge' Hinnom was the name of a valley on the south side of Jerusalem, used for crematorial purposes in the case of the worst criminals.

In addition to the text of the Sermon on the Mount and Notes, there are several chapters of exposition entitled, "Who are the Meek" "The Law of Marriage"; "The True Nature of an Oath;" "Christian Non-Resistance"; "Let him have thy Mantle also"; "Our Continual Bread"; "Judge Not"; "The Way of Life and the Way of Death"; "Many Powers"; "The Lamp of the Body." The word "Meek" usually taken to mean soft and pliant is explained as signifying that strength of character which is expressed in self-restraint, in self-mastery. "Christian Non-Resistance" in Mr. Waylen's view evidently means—Resist not evil with evil. It does not exclude resistance of the right sort. "In the desert Jesus resisted every temptation." "The Christian must 'cry aloud' against all the abuses and abominations of the world." "Against evil, the Christian has to be the greatest resister of all"; "man must be a fighter, otherwise he will degenerate"; "warfare with our own evils will render life sufficiently strenuous without engaging in the slaughter of our fellow men."

In the Sermon on the Mount the word "evil" is often used and in different senses. It in each case represents some form of the Greek "poneros" (pr.-pon-ee-ros). It is a pity that the various shades of meaning of the Greek word should be hidden by the one English rendering. "Deliver us from evil:" or as Mr. Waylen puts it, "rescue us from the Evil One," in each case expresses a clear and unmistakeable meaning. "But if thine eye be evil," would surely be faithfully translated and would make the intended sense more clear if it were rendered, "if thine eye be diseased" or as some would say,—"bad," in the sense of being in a disordered condition. Possibly in a third Edition our author may throw still further light on these sayings of the Master, and thus add to the value of what is a very helpful and informing volume.

Bible Problems.

(6) THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN.

BY REV. E. R. HODGES.

A great fissure, known as the Ghor, extends from Syria to the Red Sea. It was long ago remarked in a scientific journal that "the valley of the Jordan and basin of the Dead Sea is one of the most remarkable on the earth's surface." There is, among others, the extraordinary fact that the shores of the Dead Sea are 1,292 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, and therefore present the most depressed portion of the world's land-surface. The southern end of this old salt lake, a weird and inhospitable region, is regarded as the scene of a signal display of divine judgment. We will briefly review the ancient legend. A charmful atmosphere pervades the stories about the Hebrew patriarchs—the charm of the simple life, a condition close to nature. (See Gen. XIII. and XIX.) Lot had a dispute with Abraham on the land question (a problem which seems to be of perennial interest). It was for the most part a pastoral question. At length Abraham generously agreed that Lot should decide. He chose the fair and fertile Vale of Siddim (s. of Dead Sea)—a somewhat volcanic area, having in various places vents of bitumen and apparently a region of deep hidden fires. But, alas! they were not of these alone. The fires of evil passion stirred within the lives of the inhabitants. People of ill-repute dwelt in the settlements of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim. Their violence and immorality were well known among neighbouring tribes of nomads. These crimes cried to Heaven for vengeance.

According to tradition, the gods or rather God, in righteous wrath smote them with awful destruction. More than sixty years ago, a famous English preacher thus attempted to describe the event: "The sun rose brightly that morning, but before it had sunk below the western horizon the blood was cold in many a breast that burned with unhallowed fire, and many a pulse had ceased to beat that a few hours before throbbed with selfish passion. Down came the burning red rain of fire from heaven, the fearful expression of the wrath of God." Obviously such a description is purely imaginative. We must ask: Was this an actual event? As history, the Book of Genesis is no more free from error than others. All early histories are of necessity vague and legendary, and contain improbabilities. It is now well known that myths and legends grew up among ancient races that lived in the midst of the wild, mysterious or terrible phenomena of nature.

Welsh meres and Devonshire "tors" suggested them, and so have the volcanic features of Hawaii and New Zealand. Birket Ram in Syria is, to all appearance, a crater-lake, i.e., a body of water filling the sealed up mouth of an extinct (or dormant) volcano. An Arab legend is that its waters cover a village whose people, refusing hospitality to a poor traveller, were thus punished. There is such another myth about the Lake of Thun. We will cite one more story with a similar moral and told by a Chinese Buddhist pilgrim of the seventh century, A.D.: "There was a city called Holaolokia; it was very rich but addicted to heresy. Once an Arahat (one made free by insight) came there and was treated inhospitably, earth and sand were thrown upon him. Only one man had pity and gave him food. Then said the Arahat to him: Escape; in seven days a rain of earth and sand will fall upon the city and no one will be left, because they threw earth upon me. The man went and told his relatives, but they only mocked him. The storm came, and the man was the only one who by an underground passage escaped."

With reference to Sodom and Gomorrah, we have the testimony of Strabo the Greek traveller, and of Josephus (Jewish historian), who each visited the region and repeat the old story. But it is worthless, seeing that they shared the current belief. No doubt this story is so very ancient that it may not have originated among the Jewish race but was current in some earlier form among the primitive tribes in Palestine. There is one reason for supposing this There is a remarkable resemblance (parallelism) between the old Babylonian deluge story and that concerning Lot as given in Gen. 19, ch. 1-8, and this resemblance is seen at once in the exact sequence or order, in which the features of the two stories succeed each other. They are very striking, but we cannot give space to them here.

Of divine judgment by water and again by fire, and probably by the other two supposed four elements, air and earth, these were sufficient proofs. They who neglected the gods were fit for such punishment. The change from Polytheism to Monotheism failed to alter or remove this conviction. It is still very common. Quite recently the writer met with a person who remarked that the woes of the Belgians were God's judgment on them, because of the Congo cruelties. It is noteworthy that Jesus rejected the current belief. This is apparent in his reference to Siloam's tower (Luke xiii., 4); and in that solemn apostrophe concerning Capernaum, judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah is yet to come (Matt. xi., 24, and reappearing curiously in x., 15). But the question remains: Is the story of the Cities of the Plain real history? If we believed in the verbal inspiration of Genesis, we would say it must be. That, however, is not our position, yet we would not say that the story is false. Certain facts may have given rise to the awful narrative. It is exceedingly likely that a volcanic eruption, not unlike that which happened in Martinique a few years ago, overwhelmed whole tribes who happened to be near it. If such a catastrophe occurred in Palestine in the later "Stone" or Bronze age, long before recorded history, it would have been handed down by tradition. This Bible story, we conclude, depends on just such a happening.

When news of the destruction of Pompeii and Her-

culanæum (A.D. 79) was carried over Italy and neighbouring lands, it can hardly be doubted that some virtuous Romans and Greeks naturally said: Verily the gods have punished these people for their great wickedness. Pliny the Younger witnessed and described the eruption of Vesuvius, and his account is the only one that has come down to us. Now it is not improbable that a contemporary or one soon after Pliny, wrote of this terrible catastrophe, and viewing it from exactly the same moral standpoint as the writer of the Genesis narrative; and we may further suppose that such an account missed preservation. We can scarcely conclude that Pliny alone wrote about it. Within recent times some old legends prove to have had a basis of fact,* *e.g.* the Labyrinth of Crete, associated with the horrid tale of the Minotaur, has been unearthed.

The general principles suggested by the Bible story under study are:—

1. Be generous and impartial towards opponents. Bear and forbear.

2. Trust not to favourable appearances. Go towards that which attracts you; do this without caution and consideration; and later on you may find that your act leads to loss or other painful consequences. Ask God to help you in each enterprise.

3. Keep clear of persistent evil-doers. To live with them without reforming them morally and religiously may bring disaster to ourselves. We must not shun sinners but seek their salvation. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Bad examples are infectious; they lead others downward. First must come purity, and then peace follows. We cannot reverse this order.

4. God's judgments are for all, the well disposed and evil-doers. But there is no sharp line to be drawn; there are all degrees of goodness and badness. God's judgment of man is ever merciful and wise. He purifies by many kinds of fire, by many floods of affliction. His purpose can never fail. Retribution for wrong doing may be long delayed, but it is sure. The Divine Father loves His children to the uttermost, and will not be satisfied with less than their final redemption and immortal perfection.

E. RATTENBURY HODGES.

* The oldest known voyage of discovery (a fragment record of VI. Cent. B.C.), the Periplus of Hanno the Carthaginian, tells of "savage people whose bodies were hairy and whom our interpreter called gorillœ." This was long deemed a myth, but these formidable apes were discovered by Dr. Thos. Savage and hunted later (1860) by Du Chaillu.

The entertainment which the National U.T. Association in conjunction with the Temperance section of S.S.A. gave on Feb. 13th the Manchester Band of Hope members was a great success. It took place in Lower Mosley-street School, and consisted of a tea and entertainment of songs, recitations, and choruses. Upwards of 300 children and some 50 or 60 adults were present. Rev. T. Morley Mills was the chairman, and Mr. A. W. Harris (London) gave a short address.

National Unitarian Temperance Association

Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, W.C.

President: Mrs. H. SHAEN SOLLY. Hon. Treasurer: Mr. E. BUSER.
Hon. Sec.: Mr. E. F. COWLIN, 19, Northwood Road, Forest Hill, London.

ESSAY COMPETITION, 1915.

Essays received, 53, i.e., Class A. 31, Class B. 22.

Societies Competing 19—London 7, total Essays 32. Provinces 12, total 21.

The judges, Mrs. Solly, Rev. W. G. Tarrant, and Mr. A. W. Harris, each marked lists of the essays, taking 90 as the maximum number of marks. The essays themselves were not marked in any way, and consequently no judge knew what marks another had awarded. The marks were then totalled with the following result:—

Class A.

Ellis Alec. (age 11), Liverpool, Ullet-road. B. of H., 268 marks gained, 270 possible number of marks.

Peacock, Geo. (11), London, Mansford-st. Guild, 257—270.

Maude, Elsie (11), Mossley Band of Hope, 252—270.

Class B.

Bliss, Henry (12), London, Islington B. of H., 263—270.

Gore, Bertram (13), London, Mansford-st., Guild, 252—270.

Fraser, Lizzie (13), Dundee Band of Hope, 237—270.

Williams, Emily, (12), London, Peckham B. of H., 237—270.

The Committee have also decided to give (1) certificates to the next best three competitors in each class, (2) a special certificate to Ilford for sending the largest number of essays, and (3) medals to all competitors. Mrs. Solly kindly offered a prize to the best of the youngest competitors, and it has been gained by Harry Short, age 8, of the Wigan Guild, with 221 marks.

Lists of recommended books are being sent to the superintendents of the Societies to which the prizes belong, as it is thought that the latter would like to choose their own books.

The certificates have been gained by the following:—

Class A.

Ogden, Herbert (age 11), Mossley B. of H., 239 marks gained, 270 possible number of marks.

Whitaker, Albert (11), Mossley B. of H., 233—270.

Fearon, William (11), Birkenhead B. of H., 229—270.

Class B.

Lawrence, Doris (15), London, Peckham B. of H., 235—270.

Nicholson, Geo. (13), Middlesbrough S.S., 230—270.

Lawrence, Hilda (13), London, Peckham B. of H., 229—270.

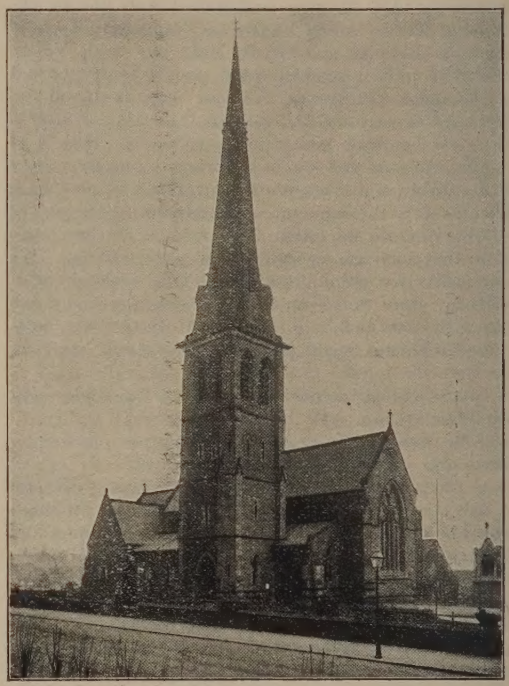
Brookfield Church,
GORTON.

In view of the fact that the Manchester District Association of (Unitarian) Sunday Schools will hold its annual meetings at Gorton on Good Friday, it is appropriate and opportune that some account of Brookfield Church and Sunday School should be given to our readers. The following historical sketch compiled from various sources, though far from complete, supplies information which should give added interest to the Good Friday meetings, both to any who may attend them and to those who may not.

Brookfield Church and Schools, Gorton, Manchester, can look back upon a long period of history since the beginning of the original congregation, from which they have descended. At the end of the 17th Century there were people in the village of Gorton who openly dissented from the episcopal system and were not satisfied with worshipping in the parish church. So they met secretly in the upper room of a house at the top of Cross-lane, and as soon as they could they secured a chapel of their own, which must have been in or before the year 1703. The first chapel was erected in what was known as Gorton Vale, where the old graveyard now is. The Horse Block used by worshippers who came from the neighbouring villages on horseback, can still be seen near the Lodge-gate of the present church grounds bearing the date 1703.

The first minister at the Old Chapel was Nehemiah Reyner, 1707-1732. He was succeeded by Samuel Hanson, 1733-1763, whose death terminated a ministry of thirty-one years. Then followed John Atchison, 1765-1788. During Mr. Atchison's ministry the present parsonage was erected mainly at the expense of the Grimshaw family in 1744. Next came William Dodge Cooper, 1788-1801. His grand-niece, Margaret Cooper, became Mrs. Thomas Cocks, the mother of several active members of the church and schools at this day. Joseph Ramsbottom was minister from 1801 to 1806, his successor being Joseph Jeffries, 1806-1827, followed by Charles Danvers Hort, 1829-1837. Then came George Henry Wells, M.A., whose ministry of over 43 years terminated in 1881; he was succeeded by Dendy Agate, B.A., 1882-1893; George Evans, M.A., 1894-1911; and the present minister, Albert Thornhill, M.A., appointed in 1911.

The Old Chapel was built mainly at the expense of Thomas Oldham, of Sandfold, Reddish, and it remained open as a place of worship until 1872. It was situated very pleasantly in the midst of its graveyard, bounded on one side by Far Lane, and on others by Gore Brook. It was ivy covered and in the time when Gorton was just a village and the surroundings were quite rural in character, the Old Chapel was a much-loved and greatly venerated House of God to many souls. The families associated with it included those of the names of Grimshaw, Shawcross, Ryder or Rider, Clay, Worthington, Dixon, Withington, Aveyard, Jones, Peacock, Cocks, Henshall, Woodhouse,



and others well-known in the neighbourhood. The Sunday School accommodation at the Old Chapel was very limited and in 1863 a separate school building was erected on the higher ground beyond the old graveyard and immediately behind where the present church now stands. This new school was urgently needed to accommodate the rapidly increasing number of scholars. In that school building which contained a large assembly room; two class rooms for seniors, one of which was fitted up as a library, and a lower infants' room, the school grew largely in numbers, and various connected institutions were established and made the school a centre of much beneficent activity. Mr. Fred Worthington, Mr. Joseph Henshall, Mr. Edward Wodhouse, Mr. Samuel Rider, were superintendents in this new school during the ministry of the Rev. G. H. Wells, M.A. In 1878, the Unitarian Home Missionary College, Manchester, placed two of its students in Gorton, William Copeland Bowie and Harry Bodell Smith, as student assistants to Mr. Wells, which was the beginning of quite a succession of students as workers in the Gorton School and Church.

It became inevitable with the lapse of time that the Old Chapel could not always meet the needs of the congregation. The urgency for a new place of worship was felt more and more until in 1870 it was decided to build a church on the higher ground fronting the New Hyde-road. This was made possible by the generosity of Mr. Richard Peacock, of Gorton Hall, a

partner in the well-known firm of Beyer and Peacock, mechanical engineers. It was said that Mr. Peacock was moved to do this as a thank-offering in gratitude for the recovery of his eldest daughter from what he greatly feared would be a fatal illness. Consequently the present beautiful church was erected, the entire cost exclusive of the keeper's house, boundary walls, and other outside work, was defrayed by Mr. Peacock; and the congregation aided by members of Grimshaw family supplemented Mr. Peacock's splendid munificence by defraying the cost of the boundary walls and keeper's lodge. The church has a tower and spire rising to a height of 150 feet, with a peal of eight bells. The building is Gothic and "Geometric decorated." The outside is entirely of stone. The Church has a nave 77ft. long and 21ft. wide, north and south aisles each 70½ft. long, 10½ft. wide, making total inside width of 42ft. The chancel is 25ft. long, 19ft. wide, and there is an organ large and powerful organ which is considered to be a very fine instrument. Messrs. Clay and Son were the contractors, and Mr. Thomas Worthington, of Manchester, was the architect. The church services are liturgical, assisted by a very efficient choir, the excellence of its music being of high repute in the neighhourhood. After the opening of the new church —named "Brookfield" because erected on the field above the brook,—the Old Chapel, around which so many affectionate memories had gathered, was demolished, to the extreme regret of many who had worshipped within its hallowed walls.

In the early years of worship in the new Brookfield Church, Mr. Richard Peacock and family attended regularly, and among others frequently seen there were Mr. George Henry Grimshaw, Mr. George Clay, the Heywood family, and occasionally Mr. Stanfield Grimshaw. Mr. Richard Peacock became M.P. for Gorton, and after his death his family generously

BROOKFIELD SUNDAY SCHOOL.

chamber and vestry. The main entrance is through the tower, and there is a porch also on the south side. The church contains comfortable sittings for 264 adults, 162 children, 20 singers in the choir, in all 446 persons and would really accommodate from 500 to 600 should occasion require. The polished red granite columns which divide the nave from the aisles greatly enhance the internal appearance of the sacred edifice. The woodwork generally including the pews is of pitch pine, but the choir stalls and chancel fittings are of oak. The pulpit has a base of Caen stone, supported by richly coloured marble columns, the upper part being of carved oak. The reading desk, communion table and organ screen are also of carved oak. The windows are filled with stained glass in geometrical patterns. The east window in the chancel has four lights with palm, lily, rose, and vine, and suitable texts, and "the Lamb" in octafoil above. There is a added adjoining fields to the grounds. It is noteworthy that the Grimshaw family has been connected all through the history of the congregation from the erection of the Old Chapel to the present time. Mr. Stanfield Grimshaw still retaining his interest though residing in London. A substantial portion of the church endowment came from that family.

The school behind the church became too small for the increasing demands upon its capacity, and it was felt that a larger building was much needed. As a result of a generous bequest by the death of Mr. George Clay and munificent donations from Colonel Peacock and other members of his family the present schools were built in 1900, and the older school was pulled down. The agencies at work in connection with the school are many, involving a yearly expenditure of more than £200. There are over 500 scholars and teachers; there is a Girls' Guild, a Boys' Brigade,

Literary and Debating Societies, Sick and Burial Society, Penny Bank, Holiday Savings Club; Tennis, Hockey, Cricket, and Football Clubs; Evening Clubs for both sexes; Ambulance Classes, and other useful activities. Two young men of this Sunday school entered the Unitarian Home Missionary College in 1895 to prepare for the ministry, and are now rendering excellent service—Rev. Joseph Worthington, B.A. late of Mount Pottinger, Belfast, and now minister at Heywood, Lancashire; and Rev Alfred Davison, of Dromore, Co. Down. Over 60 Brookfield members and scholars have joined the army or navy since the war began.

Gorton is no longer a village, but has during recent years become rapidly built over and is now a populous neighbourhood and is incorporated as part of the City of Manchester. With such a community for its field of activity Brookfield Church and schools hold an important and commanding position, and exercise considerable influence for good in the immediate locality. Originating from Calvinistic Puritanism in the 17th Century, but left free by its trust-deeds to adjust its religious doctrines in accordance with new light, the congregation and minister of the religious society which Brookfield Church now represents, became Unitarian by the time of Dr. Joseph Priestley, not later than 1770, and have remained so to this day, but ever progressing with those developments in religious thought and doctrine with which Unitarianism is identified.

The beautiful church, with its steeple pointing heavenwards, situated in extensive burial grounds well-kept and tastefully laid out, attracts many visitors. It is one of the finest church buildings Unitarians possess in this kingdom. Along with its Sunday school it stands as a centre of light and life to the adjacent community. With its large company of faithful workers, the great opportunity that lies open to it indicates the possibility of an increasingly glorious future. It does not seem at all probable that Brookfield Church and School will ever be lacking in loyal and devoted workers endeavouring to realise that consummation so devoutly wished.

National Conference Guilds' Union.

President: Rev. W. H. LAMBELLE. Hon. Sec.: Rev. H. FISHER SHORT

Motto: "FOR GOD AND THE GOOD LIFE."

MONTHLY MESSAGE: "About Children's Guilds"
(Read at a recent conference of the Midland Guilds' Union.)

(Concluded.)

Frankly, what I have in mind is that we shall store the child memory with the formal prososition of a creed.

Every week, in my own Junior Guild, the children repeat after me the following Declaration of Faith:—

We believe that God is Love;

We believe that Religion is love to God and love to man;

We believe in the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of man, the Leadership of Jesus, Salvation by character, and the Progress of the Race onward and upward forever.

"But the children cannot understand it," you may protest. Of course, they cannot understand it; nor are they expected to understand it—at present.

Poor Rab, in "Bunty" protested that he could not understand the Shorter Catechism, but he had to "learn it," all the same.

Those canny Scots knew what they were about. They knew that by compelling their children to fasten in memory the Calvinistic fundamentals, they were casting bread upon the waters which should be seen after many days. And they were right. And shall we, with out broader, deeper, loftier principles and ideals, be less right than they? Shall the narrow prejudices of liberality gone mad cause us to spend our time and strength for nought? Worse still, shall we, for the sake of a mere whim we have never attempted to justify to ourselves, grievously wrong our children by allowing them to grow up with minds and souls religiously unfurnished? Perish the thought; and perish the blind prejudice that has erstwhile misled us.

In stressing the religious, which is the principal, aspect of our work, I am not advocating that our Guilds should be spiritual forcing houses. Old fashioned enough to be up-to-date, I am putting forth a plea for the thoroughly modern method of suggestion.

If the Declaration above be repeated constantly, decently, reverently, it may have comparatively small influence on the superficial life, thought and feeling of the child—though it will not be wholly wasted here—but it will be stored up in the sub-conscious mind and, later on, when it shall be needed, shall emerge from the subliminal to enrich the empirical self and to guide the growing soul that otherwise might be bewildered by the labyrinthine maze of the world.

Finally, what are the sacrifices to be made? Under the head of difficulties, I have already named one, namely, prejudice. Other sacrifices are less high-sounding, but not less imperative. No one has a right to the high privilege of shaping the young life in our Guilds who is not ready and willing to sacrifice ease, time and labour to the great call.

The call is not to the shallow, the trifler, the slacker—to those who are dead without being aware of it; unless it come as a divine imperative, it cannot be said to come at all. It will come, however, to those who have discovered what is disclosed in the following unadorned words of G.B.S.:—"Things will never get right, unless you put them right; and they will not stay right, unless you hold them right." The moral of which in the present connection is: We are fellow-labourers together with God in the garden of childhood, which, instead of being allowed through neglect to produce rank or stunted growths, under our divinely aided tutelage, shall, in the fulness of time, bring forth roses and lilies.

Anecdotes and Illustrations.

DIFFERENCES OF VIEW.

The Caliph Haroun-ar-Raschid had a summer-house erected in his garden. He ordered in one room overlooking the river there should be windows of many colours all facing the same way. One pane was to be red, another yellow, another blue, and so on. And one day he took a learned Sheikh in with him, and said: "Look through the window and tell me the colour of the river."

"Commander of the Faithful, the river is blue," returned the Sheikh.

Drawing aside the curtain hiding the other windows, the Caliph commanded him to look through each in turn and tell the colour of the water of the river, and each time, of course, the Sheikh's answer was different. When they had left the room the Caliph said to the Sheikh: "The peoples of the world stand at the different windows, and they see life differently because the colour of the glass is different." —"Islamic Review."

SAVED BY HIS HORSE.

A graphic narrative is told in the "Natal Advertiser" by Surgeon-Captain Grey, one of the officers who served in Rhodesia. In the attack on Mashangombis the horses began to drop, and soon thirteen lay on the ground, and it looked as if all the men would be killed. Evidently Captain Turner thought so, for he virtually gave the order "Sauve qui peut," telling every man to fight the best he could for his own hand. But though the horses continued to fall the men escaped. Dr. Grey, to use his own words, "led towards the way out under a raking fire at a gallop, and was closely followed by the troop. Very soon, however, I fell from the saddle struck with a bullet from an elephant gun about 500 yards off. The bullet struck me on the top of the thigh, smashing the socket of the thigh bone, breaking a vein and otherwise wounding me. My horse was carried on at full speed with the rearguard, which rushed at desperate speed to clear the pocket-like entrance of the drift, where the natives were rallying in the hope of killing us. As I lay on the grass bleeding profusely I looked up and saw two natives aiming at me at a distance of about 40ft. At the same moment I saw my horse come thundering back from the drift. It suddenly stopped and came and stood over my prostrate body, covering me from the firing, and at the same time making a peculiar noise through its nostrils. I thought it had been wounded, and that with the pain, noise and confusion it had gone mad. This notion, however, was soon dispelled, for it continued to stand over me in a kneeling posture, and I could see that the faithful animal had come back to protect me. I may remark here that this horse which I myself selected I made a pet of. The assegais from the approaching natives were now beginning to fly around me, and thinking if I could reach my horse's back I should be shot, which was preferable to being assegaied, I seized the reins, put my right foot in the stirrup and made a supreme effort to mount. And I was successful. But how I did it I do not know for my left side was entirely paralysed. On finding myself in the saddle I called 'Go' to my horse, which darted like an arrow towards the exit from the drift." The captain adds that the horse was an old pet of his and had always been made much of.

The Annual Meeting of the Sheffield and District Unitarian and F. C. Sunday School Union was held, Mar. 11th, returns showing 1109 scholars and 111 teachers in the Union.

The Rochdale District Fellowship of five Unitarian Churches had its annual meeting, Mar. 13th, at Oldham, when Dr. Geo. Jessel gave an address on "The Future of Unitarianism"; 250 present.

A Conference in connection with the Yorkshire Unitarian Union was held at Dewsbury, Mar. 13th, when there was a lengthy discussion on the report of National Conference Committee on the state of our churches.

DEATHS: Mr. James Halstead, Burnley, Feb. 11th, 71; Miss Sarah Hinton, Burnley, Feb.—; Mr. John Shillito, J.P., F.R.G.S., Halifax, Feb. 12th, 83; Miss Kate Spiller, Bridgwater, Feb. 15th; Mrs. Ellen Marten, Streatham, London, Feb. 18th, 83; Mrs. M'Ninch, Larne, Feb. 16th; Mrs. Mellor, Ashton-under-Lyne, Feb.—, 79; Mr. James Lord, Padiham, Feb. —, 75; Margaret Woods, Rivington, near Bolton, Feb. 19th, 79; Miss Lilian Keilett, Ashton-under-Lyne, Feb. 25th, 17; Miss Mary Martineau, Clapham Park, London, Feb. 26th, 86; Mrs. R. W. Wilde, of Grappenhall, Cheshire, at Woking, Feb. 25th, 40; Mr. Ronald W. Wilson, R.A.M.C., Territorials, Fortis Green, London, N., Feb. 28th, 19; Mr. T. P. Warren, of Lancaster Gate, London, N., March 3rd, 77; Mrs. Russell Swanwick, Cirencester, March 4th, 67; Mrs. Jane McCalmont, Raloo, Antrim, Feb. 23rd, 85; Mrs. James Strachan, Hull, Feb. 26th; Mr. Edward Rider, Gorton, Feb. 25th, 48; Mr. W. H. Parker, Newton Abbot, Mar. 6th; Mr. John Dean, Gorton, Mar. 9th, 66; Mr. J. R. G. Grundy, Blackpool, Mar. 12th, 74; Mrs. Thomas Bracewell, Blackpool, Mar. 12th, 68; Mr. Samuel Ervine, Belfast, Mar. 13th, 56; Miss Maud Notcutt, Crouch End, London, N., Mar. 14th, 47; Mrs E. W. Smith, Hyde, Mar. 16th,, 67.

MINISTERIAL CHANGES: Rev. Jenkyn L. Jones, formerly minister at Woolwich, is re-entering the ministry, and is commended by a resolution of the Southern Advisory Committee; Miss Helen L. Phillips, of Nottingham, is appointed to take ministerial charge of the Carlisle congregation, commencing in May; Rev. R. F. Rattray, M.A., Ph.Dd., has entered upon his ministry at Hindley; Mr. Clement Ryley is appointed to conduct the services at Parkstone, Dorset; Rev. T. E. Davies, ex-Congregational, is appointed Unitarian Minister for Pontypridd; Rev. T. B. Evans, M.A., late of Heywood, has accepted appointment at Sidmouth; Rev. J. H. Weatherall, M.A., was welcomed to his new ministry, Essex Church, London, at a congregational meeting, Mar. 17th.

SUNDAY SCHOOL HELPS.

Lesson Notes on The Life of Jesus

Text-book: The New Testament.
Reference books: Giran's "Jesus of Nazareth"; Carpenter's "First Three Gospels."

April 4th.—JESUS BEGINS TO PREACH.

Scripture reading: Matt. iv., 12-22. References: Giran, 82; Carpenter, 320.

1. The Young Preacher.

How young was Jesus when he began to preach? Some expert authorities assert that he began to preach at the end of 28 A.D., or early in 29; others in 26 or 27. It is quite uncertain. But if his birth was in 4 B.C., the year when Herod the great died, then 26 A.D. would make him "about 30 years of age" (Luke iii, 23) when he made his first appearance as a public teacher. The tradition of Luke's Gospel may be taken as the most reliable evidence we have on this point. In that case Jesus was not youthful, but had come to his full manhood. He had gone through his struggle in the wilderness. He had meditated long and earnestly upon the subject of his real mission in life, with the result that he was resolved to be a preacher of the good news of the Kingdom of God.

At first no doubt he would follow somewhat closely the message of John the Baptist. Seeing that his sympathies for the moral revolution initiated by the Baptist were so strong as to impel him to give public adhesion to it, nothing could be more natural than that he should at first be much influenced by the preaching of John. Consequently we find that he began by proclaiming almost identically the same message: 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the good news (Gospel.)" (Mark i., 15.)

2. The first disciples.

Almost at once Jesus won support. There was evidently in him a strong power of personal attraction. He would feel the great need of comradeship in his work. The Gospel writers describe Jesus at the very outset of his ministry, walking on the shore of the Sea of Galilee and talking to the fishermen. Possibly these men had heard John the Baptist and had their hearts deeply stirred by him or if not, they had certainly heard much of what the Baptist had done, and discussed his work with sympathy and approval among their fellows. So when Jesus talked with them they would be as soil already prepared for the seed. Jesus would tell them that he was giving his life to help on the good work set going by John, and finding them deeply interested, what more natural than that he should say "Come and join me!" He is reported to have said to Simon Peter and to Andrew his brother: "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men"; and two others, James and John, sons of Zebedee. And they straightway became his followers. To spend time catching fish is a useful and necessary occupation, but what an opportunity for much grander work than that, the catching of men, laying hold of them with the bait of glad tidings of heavenly truth, to save them from sin and wretchedness. Thus did Jesus win his first disciples.

April 11th.—JESUS AT CAPERNAUM.

Scripture reading: Mark i., 21-31. References: Giran, 83.

1. Why first at Capernaum?

It is evident from the three first Gospels that Jesus began his public ministry at Capernaum. This is plainly stated in Mark i., 21; Matt. iv., 13; Luke iv. 23. He chose this as a better place to begin, no doubt because being a seaside fishing village the population would be more various and the occupations of the people also, with a more keenly awakened interest in public questions. A seaside population is often receiving newcomers from across the water and from inland towns and villages. People come and go on matters of business and import fresh interests and new ideas. Such people, more than the somewhat quieter and comparatively sluggish minds of those in the rural districts or mountain villages, would more readily listen with sympathy to any new teacher who might appear among them. Then there was the other reason: Jesus would not be hampered by the wishes of his own near relatives, by their prejudices and familiarity. He would have a freer opportunity, and would open his ministry with a much better chance of arousing public interest in what he had to say.

2. In the Synagogue.

Jesus entered into the Synagogue and taught. The synagogue service was very democratic in character. The scripture could be read by any member of the congregation, and perhaps as many as a dozen different people would often take part, invited by the "Ruler of the Synagogue." Or anyone willing would stand up to read, as Jesus did at Nazareth (Luke iv., 16). The sermon would be preached by anyone present invited to do so, any visitor or "likely-looking stranger" (Gannett). So Jesus would read the Scriptures and comment upon them. The more striking and luminous his exposition of the Scripture passages, the more surely would he be asked to preach the sermon. Always there would be opportunity for him to give expression to his ideas. If his personality were attractive as was evidently the case, and his manner earnest, persuasive and winning, he would be pressed to speak whenever he was present. The synagogue or meeting-house, therefore, gave him his best opportunity for the beginning of his mission as a teacher.

April 18th.—JESUS THE HEALER.

Scripture reading: Mark i., 32-45. References: Giran 90-100; Carpenter, 327-8.

1. Casting out demons.

Jesus is described as healing "many that were sick with divers diseases," and as casting out "many demons," (Mark i., 34). It was the popular belief at that time that there were evil spirits which entered

into, and taking possession of human beings caused various kinds of maladies or diseases. If we regard the record as historical, though written long after Jesus died, it appears that he accepted the popular belief in some way. If there were a disorder within, it had some evil as its cause. If a man believes he is possessed by an evil spirit he has the natural disorder resulting therefrom as if it were really so, even though there is no such possession. But the false belief is the evil spirit. The superstition produces evil results. Cast out the false belief and the malady it causes will disappear. In this sense if in no other, did Jesus share the prevalent doctrine. So if he looked into the eyes of the afflicted one and said: "Come out thou evil spirit and begone!" and then told the man, "The evil spirit is gone," so that the man believed it was gone, the natural result of the changed belief would be that the inward disorder would no longer exist and the afflicted would be cured. A mere suggestion to a nervous person that he is very ill will make him ill, and a similar suggestion that he looks thoroughly well, will make him better. The casting out of demons told of Jesus was mostly from people afflicted with nervous maladies and mental disorders, and the cures can be explained and understood on natural grounds. Healing the sick was a ministry in which Jesus was evidently very successful. He asks questions such as any d ctor might ask: "How long is it since this has come?" (Mark ix., 21); gives directions as to diet: "he commanded that something be given her to eat" (Mark v., 43); advises bathing: "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (John ix., 7.) In an unscientific age when the study of medicine amongst the Jews was quite unknown Jesus wrought surprising cures by the exercise of abundance of "common sense," and by awakening the power of faith in the sufferer: "Thy faith hath made thee whole" (Matt. ix., 22); "According to your faith be it done unto you" (Matt. ix., 29) He showed people how to cure themselves by giving them faith. He treated moral disorders in the same way: "Thy faith hath saved thee" (Luke vii., 50). There was nothing miraculous in all this, but it was perfectly natural.

2. His Methods of Healing.

In Mark i., 30-1, there is the incident of Simon's wife's mother sick of a fever. How does Jesus deal with it? "He came and took her by the hand and raised her up; and the fever left her." There was no magic in it. She lay in a position which sent the blood to her head, or under conditions which made her too hot; he saw what was needed to relieve her, and did it, and immediately she was better. Then there is the case of the leper, 40-44: the man had faith that Jesus could cure him; "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." And Jesus said: "I will; be thou made clean. And straightway the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean." We must allow for the colouring of the reporter or of those from whom the writer of the record received the report. "Straightway" may be too overdrawn. That the leper was made clean may be unquestioned, but that it happened instantly is open to doubt. If the man were a moral leper, foul with evil habits, the moral power of Jesus might well make an immediate change of feeling that would at once begin the cleansing of soul; and if a physical leper, the command "be clean!" if at once obeyed would instantly start the cleansing which strictly persevered in might, in this special case, soon result in a complete cure. There is no reason to suppose that any other than natural means were employed by Jesus in his healing of the sick. There was in him such an absence of the usual incantation, and so much more exercise of natural intelligence that the surprise of people was great that he succeeded where so many others would fail.

April 25th.—JESUS AT NAZARETH.

Scripture Reading: Luke iv., 16-30. Reference: Carpenter, 335-6.

1. Jesus Announces His Mission.

This he had done already on the sea shore to groups of fisher-folk, as is plainly shown by his having won to himself the adhesion of Peter, Andrew, James, and John. And at Capernaum his ministry had become widely known, and news of his popularity there had reached his native village. But at Nazareth amongst his neighbours and familiar friends with whom he had been brought up it was more difficult to secure recognition as a public teacher. To hide his light would increase his difficulties and weaken his prospects of service. In the interest of the high cause he had at heart it was necessary that he should boldly assert his call to be a prophet of God. Consequently he "stood up to read" in "the book of the prophet Isaiah" where it is said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor"; and these words he applied directly to himself by saying that this Scripture was also fulfilled in himself. But he evidently stated this in such persuasive and convincing terms that all present "wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth." They were astonished as if to say: Who would have thought it? Why, we have known him all his life. "Is not this Joseph's son?" The quiet, studious youth they had known, they never expected to become a prophet. But out of that quiet and meditation great thoughts had come, and a sublime mission had at last been revealed and Jesus did not belittle his task, but resolutely asserted his divine call to its fulfilment. Incidentally we get a graphic description of part of the synagogue service. "As his custom was" are words which throw much light on his previous habits.

2. "No prophet is acceptable in his own country."

Such absolute negative is scarcely what Jesus meant. The rendering of Mark vi., 4, is better: "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house;"—see also Matt. xiii., 57. He had just said that perhaps his acquaintances in the synagogue would turn on him and exclaim "Physician heal thyself!"—correct your own faults; put yourself right; and that they might wonder why he did not do as great things amongst

them in Nazareth as the things they had heard of as done at Capernaum. His explanation that a prophet is not honoured amongst his own familiar acquaintances, meant that it was because they had not the same faith in him, and did not look to him expecting such things, that he could not do them in Nazareth. In Matt. vi. 58, it is put plainly: "he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief"; and in Mark vi., 5-6, "he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief." If people believe in a teacher he can certainly do more for them. The familiar acquaintances of Jesus at Nazareth lost much through their own blindness—lack of insight, in not seeing in him his great power for good, and in not appreciating it and honouring him for it. Thus do many people fail to see the power that resides in those nearest to them, and by their conduct show that they never dream of any great things coming from them; and they receive less benefit from them as a natural consequence.

British League of Unitarian and other Liberal Christian Women.

Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, W.C.
Hon. Secretaries: Miss H. Brooke Herford and Miss Violet Preston.

Concerning the two appeals for clothing, etc., lately put before the League Branches, Mrs. Aves sends thanks for several more parcels for the Belgian orphans, and Mrs. B. M. Allen for the numerous gifts she has received for her Belgian hospitals. Among the contributors to the above have been Stalybridge, Stourbridge, and Gainsboro'. The Fellowship Committee have received a further list of names of men from our Canadian churches who are coming over with the second part of their Expeditionary Force. As in the case of the earlier comers thus brought to our notice, cordial greetings and offers of hospitality from various London members will be sent

A few months ago some "special prayers for use in war time" were published by the League Committee in the hope that they might be found helpful to fellow-workers when meeting together

It is encouraging to hear that these prayers have been used in a good many branches, and from the secretary of one of them comes the following: "We always begin the meeting of our Branch 'by reading one of the special prayers, and I believe this innovation has been much appreciated. I trust the time will quickly come when these prayers will no longer be appropriate, but I do hope that by that time we shall have other prayers suitable for opening our meetings, as I should be very sorry to drop that part of the meeting."

It has been decided to hold the annual meeting as usual on the Wednesday in Whit-week. The Committee hope that Branches will be represented so that in this time of stress and anxiety they may have the encouragement and refreshment which come from such a gathering of fellow-workers.

NEWS FROM BRANCHES.

Todmorden has apparently kept up its meetings with much vigour. A "Chrysanthemum Carnival" was held in December and a profit of £10 realised. Gifts of clothing have been sent to Mrs. Aves collection. Several members are active workers on the Local Relief and Belgian Refugees Committees.

UPPERTHORPE has sent very large contributions of clothing to our soldiers and sailors, and also to Mrs. Allen.

GEE CROSS has sent £19 to Mrs. Allen. They seem to have a splendid band of workers there, and the secretary says she feels that co-operation "has done a great deal to quicken the life of their church."

FAILSWORTH has raised some money by teas held fortnightly, which has been sent to the Local Red Cross Society. A great deal of sewing has also been done for soldiers and sailors, and a large number of second-hand garments repaired and sent to the local hospital.

STOURBRIDGE has been particularly energetic. During a part of August and September the Sewing Society met every evening. Work is done for the Belgian soldiers interned in Holland, who, poor fellows, are necessarily in far worse case than our own men there. The mine-workers have also benefited, and our John Pounds Home has not been forgotten. Altogether some 300 articles have been sent out by this small Society.

H.B.H.

(The Fellowship Circular is held over.)

THE WIDE WORLD.

In the United States the Rev. "Billy" Sunday is causing considerable religious excitement by his substantial orthodox revival services He has now attacked the City of Phliadelphia, and has been drawing audiences of 10,000 people twice daily. He specially abuses the Unitarians. Here are some choice specimens:

"Listen! I'll allow no man on earth or in hell to attempt to strip Jesus Christ of his divinity without a fight from me. If you insult my wife I'll scrap, and if you insult my Jesus, by the Eternal God you can expect a fight."

"The Unitarians are not even in the kingdom of Christ. Some of them have been worrying because I haven't answered their attacks.. They won't have to. They are not Christians. Whosoever denies Christ is not a Christian."

"Oh, I could preach a sort of gospel that would make every Christian Scientist and Unitarian say, 'He's a nice little man.' I could preach a kind of gospel that would make every saloon keeper say, 'Bill's not such a bad scout after all.' But I wouldn't be pleasing God."

But this is good for the Unitarians. It is a challenge to them. It calls public attention to their position. It advertises their existence. And it has been filling their churches.

Notes and News.

At Accrington a "Housewives Fair," March 13th, realised £30 for the Church Funds; a party of the young people, "Oxford Pierrots," helped the funds by entertainments, and did the same for the Congregationals, Baptists, and Swedenborgians; Rev. A. Vates, Congregational minister, has addressed the Unitarian Men's Sunday Afternoon Class.

At Ilford as elsewhere the Evangelical Free Church Council rightly excludes Unitarians from membership; at Blackpool the Nonconformist Ministers' Fraternal has invited the two Unitarian ministers into membership by 22 votes out of 24

A series of Lenten Services has been organised and held in Essex Hall, London, on Wednesdays in March.

The public statue of Florence Nightingale erected in the metropolis is the only public statue of a woman other than royalties, in London, and this in honour of a Unitarian.

Unitarians of Tokyo, Japan, have sent a quantity of toys to England for Unitarian children as an expression of sympathy in this time of crisis.

The Rev. Charles Hargrove, M.A., Minister Emeritus, Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds, is about to remove from Yorkshire to take up residence in London.

Efforts by Unitarians for war relief include: The Chesham (Bury) Unitarians, raised £10 for comforts for British soldiers interned in Germany; 62 scholars of Belfast First Church S.S., who won prizes for conduct and attendance, gave the value to the "Work for Women Fund," and the officials of that Fund sent them pretty certificates of self-denial, and these have been publicly presented; at Hale, Cheshire, elder girls of the Unitarian S.S. raised £4 10s. by an entertainment to send to the Unitarian Women's League Fund to relieve Belgians in Holland; 38 young men of Upper Chapel, Sheffield, have joined the colours, the congregation has provided and furnished a large house and two cottages for Belgian refugees by £100 in donations, besides gifts of furniture, and over £7 a week is being contributed for maintenance; the United Sewing Meeting of the Sheffield Unitarian Congregation has sent 1,850 garments for war relief; Leeds Mill Hill Sewing Society has contributed 516 articles including 178 hand-knitted socks for war relief purposes; The "Inquirer" Belgian Hospital Fund now amounts to over £1,500; the Swansea Unitarian Church has transformed its schoolroom into a dwelling for 13 Belgian refugees and contributes £1 weekly towards their maintenance; Chester S.S. entertainment, £4 7s. 6d., for the Sunday School Association Motor Ambulance Fund; Birkenhead Unitarian Sewing Society, 350 garments for soldiers and Belgian refugees. Stourbridge congregation contributes £1 10s. weekly to Belgian refugees, and its women have made over 300 garments for soldiers and given £5 to Belgian Fund.

The Northumberland and Durham Unitarian Christian Association has presented an address publicly to its president, Sir Joseph Baxter Ellis, J.P., congratulating him on completing 50 years' connection with Unitarianism in Newcastle. Sir Joseph has been Sheriff and Mayor, and has since been the first Lord Mayor of Newcastle, and was then knighted by King Edward. The Newcastle Church has also congratulated him.

The congregation at York, St. Saviour Gate (Unitarian) Chapel reports considerable revival of strength under the ministry of Rev. J. Tyssul Davis, B.A.

The Liverpool Unitarian Postal Mission has received a large increase of applications for literature in spite of the war.

At Stratford, London, the annual meeting of the Unitarian congregation received satisfactory reports of considerable activity and progress in its work and various agencies, including the Church, Sunday School, the Church Guild; the re-organised Band of Hope as—The Independent Order of Young Christian Citizens, Lindsey Lodge; troop of Boy Scouts of 50 members, etc.

The Triennial Meeting of managers of the Ministers' Pension and Insurance Fund reported that £2,144 7s. 6d. had been paid to representatives of eight deceased beneficiaries, and that the late Miss Gaskell had left a legacy of £100, and that there was a reversionary legacy of £1,000 from Mrs. Alfred Worthington for the Fund.

The Anniversary Meetings of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, the Sunday School Association, the Women's League, the Central Postal Mission, the Ministers' Conference, the Lay Preachers Union, and the Unitarian Temperance Association will be held as usual during Whit-week.

It is reported that the protests against abandoning the meetings of the National Conference have not been in vain, and that the Conference will hold meetings in London in September.

On the authority of a curate it is said that there will be dentistry in the next life. He was reading to an old lady about the "wailing and gnashing of teeth," and the old lady retorted, "Let them gnash as has 'em." Then the curate assured her, "They will certainly be provided."

The London Sunday School Society held its annual meeting at Essex Hall, March 3rd. Its 25 schools include 415 teachers, 3,807 scholars, 250 of them being over 16 years of age.

The East Cheshire Christian Union of Churches held its Annual Meeting at Glossop, March 6th, with Mrs. Partington, the Mayoress, presiding.

Still more Unitarian recruits to His Majesty's forces are Coseley, 2 (additional); Leeds, Mill Hill, 3 (additional); London, Islington, 11; Stratford, 11; Rochdale, 3 (additional); Astley, 3 (additional); Birkenhead, 2 (additional); Chester, 26; Coventry, 15. Irish congregations 56 (additional); Liscard, 3 (additional); Sheffield, Attercliffe, 2 (additional), Upper Chapel, 6 (additional), and Upperthorpe, 12 (additional); Stannington, 8; Stourbridge, 7 (additional); Wareham, 16.

A new Church Institute has been established by the Unitarians at Chesham, Bury.

Manchester District Sunday School Association.

The 70th ANNUAL MEETING will be at

BROOKFIELD CHURCH & SCHOOL, GORTON,

Manchester, on GOOD FRIDAY, April 2nd.

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